THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 11th December 1923.

The House met at 11 o'clock, the President (the hon. Diwan Bahadur Sir P. RAJAGOPALA ACHARIYAR, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.) in the chair.

I

NEW MEMBER.

The following Member was sworn in :—

Sriman BISVANATH DAS Mahasayo (Ganjām).

II

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[*Order made by the President of the Madras Legislative Council under Standing Order No.* 15—

(1) Printed copies of the questions and answers to be put and given at a meeting of the Council shall be placed on the Council table an hour before the President takes his seat.

(2) The questions and answers shall be arranged in order of subjects.

The Secretary shall call the name of each interpellator in the order in which the names are printed, specify the serial numbers of his questions, and make a sufficient pause to allow him or any other member a reasonable opportunity of rising in his place if he is desirous of asking a supplementary question. Supplementary questions must be put immediately after the principal questions to which they relate.]

ARMS ACT.

Licences issued under the Arms Act in the Coimbatore district.

15 Q.—Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) the total number of licences issued in the Coimbatore district under the Arms Act and the number of licences issued for the possession of revolvers in the first four months of the year 1922 and in the corresponding period of the year 1923 ; whether there has been a large reduction and, if so, whether there are any special reasons for the same ;

(*b*) whether the reduction has been made by the order of the District Magistrate himself or at the suggestion of the Government ;

(*c*) whether there are any rules framed by the Government in the matter, or whether it is left entirely to the discretion of the District Magistrate ;

(*d*) whether the Government have any intention of interfering in the matter, especially in view of the fact that the Coimbatore district contains a large area as reserved forest having wild beasts, etc. ; and

(*e*) whether the Government have any objection to form a small committee to advise the District Magistrate on the matter of issuing licences ?

A.—(*a*) The figures asked for are as follows :—

	1922.	1923.
Total number of licences issued during the first four months of	246	257
Number of licences issued for the possession of revolvers during the first four months of	44	15

There has been a reduction in the number of revolver licences because in certain cases their possession was found to be unnecessary or undesirable.

(*b*) The District Magistrate made the reduction on his own initiative.

(*c*) The hon. Member's attention is invited to the Resolution of the Government of India in the Home Department No. 2125-C (Police), dated the 21st March 1919, published at pages 528-530 of the supplement to the *Gazette of India*, dated the 22nd March 1919, of which paragraph 4 (7) (i) runs as follows :—

"Licences for revolvers and pistols will be issued only in cases of real necessity and to persons of approved character, the fee being fixed at an enhanced rate of Rs. 10............"

District Magistrates have general discretion as to the grant of licences under the Arms Act.

(*d*) The Government do not propose to interfere with the District Magistrate's discretion in the matter. A revolver except perhaps in the hands of a very expert marksman is of no value as a means of destroying wild animals.

(*e*) The Government are not prepared to appoint a committee to advise the District Magistrate regarding the issue of licences.

Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar :—"Sir, in the answer to question No. 15 it is said that the District Magistrate made the reduction in the number of licences on his own initiative. May I know whether any police report was received in those cases to say that licences should not be issued?"

The hon. Mr. A. R. Knapp :—"I have no information as to the procedure adopted by the District Magistrate in refusing licences."

Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar :—"I wish to know, Sir, whether the parties concerned were given notice to explain why their licences should not be cancelled."

The hon. Mr. A. R. Knapp :—"I have no information, Sir ; but if the hon. Member wishes to obtain the information, he may give notice of a fresh question."

Local Self-Government.

Influenza-vaccine tubes.

16 *Q.*—Mr. A. Ranganatha Mudaliyar : Will the hon. the Minister for Local Self-Government be pleased to state—

(*a*) the number of influenza-vaccine tubes prepared in the years 1921 to 1923 in the King Institute and the rate at which they were sold to the public ;